



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 3 January 1969



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
3 JANUARY 1969

1. Israel -
Arab States

Israeli aircraft are regularly overflying southern Lebanon, ready to retaliate if there are further guerilla attacks. Yesterday the Israelis once again called in aircraft to bomb villages in northern Jordan following a shelling incident on the border.

2. Soviet Union -
Middle East

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3. South Vietnam

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4. France

Political and economic uncertainties last year further slowed development of De Gaulle's nuclear force de dissuasion. The US Intelligence Board this week approved a national intelligence estimate which re-evaluates the program's prospects. The following are the conclusions:

--Of the three weapons systems which are to comprise the force--medium-range bombers, IRBMs, and Polaris-type submarines--only the bombers are operational. Their range and performance, however, give them a very limited capability against the Soviet Union.

--The small IRBM force of 27 missiles originally was to begin replacing the bombers in 1966, but we now believe the first missiles will not be operational until late 1970 at the very earliest. The first Polaris-type submarine will probably become operational in late 1971 or 1972, and additions to the fleet of missile subs will probably be made at about two-year intervals thereafter until the French have four or five boats.

--The recently announced cancellation of Pacific nuclear tests in 1969 means the French are unlikely to have thermonuclear warheads before 1973, and then only if testing is resumed in 1970.

--De Gaulle will be extremely reluctant to stretch out the development of his nuclear force any further than he already has, but he would probably be forced to do so by new economic difficulties.

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5. Soviet Union

Satellite photography [redacted]

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[redacted] shows the Soviets' biggest space booster back on its launch pad. The booster, which has been photographed on its pad several times [redacted] was returned to the nearby checkout building [redacted]. Assuming the checkout turned up no major difficulties, the first flight test could occur within the next few months.

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6. Peru -
Soviet Union

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[redacted]
Lima and Moscow have agreed to open diplomatic relations. Since the military government took over in October, it has established diplomatic ties with Rumania and Yugoslavia and has signed trade agreements with Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary.

7. Sweden -
Middle East

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Foreign Shipping During November: Seaborne imports to North Vietnam decreased by 14 percent--from 164,000 tons in October to 141,000 tons in November--despite an increase in foreign ship arrivals from 34 to 42. A drop in dry cargo deliveries by Soviet ships from the Black Sea accounted for most of this decline. Deliveries of foodstuffs (68,000 tons) were higher than in October, while those of petroleum (24,000 tons), fertilizer (4,000 tons), and general and miscellaneous cargo dropped sharply from October rates. Timber deliveries (8,000 tons) were at a record level.

Seaborne exports climbed to 74,000 tons in November, 59 percent above the volume in October. Coal exports of 62,000 tons were the highest in six months, and exports of general and miscellaneous cargo of 12,000 tons were the highest in 17 months. No seaborne imports of arms or ammunition were detected during November. Projected seaborne imports for December show an increase to about the monthly average in January-November--160,000 tons.

Ship congestion at Haiphong continued to decrease in November but was still far greater than the low of May 1968. The average number of dry cargo ships in port per day dropped from 33 in October to 29 in November, compared with 16 in May. The average layover time for departing dry cargo ships fell from 35 days in October to 30 days in November, compared with 14 days in May. The cargo discharge rate at Haiphong in November remained well below the high rate achieved in July, probably because of a reduction in berthing capacity stemming from silting alongside the transit and fishing wharves.

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Pham Van Dong Interview: The premier took a tough stand on terms for a Vietnam settlement during an interview with a TASS correspondent in Hanoi yesterday. He stuck routinely to Communist insistence

that a peaceful settlement meant US and allied troop withdrawal leaving the South Vietnamese people free to resolve their domestic questions in accordance with the Front's political program.

According to an account of the conversation broadcast by the TASS international service, Dong pushed the demand for a "peace cabinet" in South Vietnam. He said it would be formed following the mass overthrow of the present Saigon government. It would then start negotiations with the Front which would result in a coalition government.

He indicated bitter fighting was ahead since the US persists in its "aggressive designs" despite having been "defeated." He claimed that the US had threatened to resume full-scale bombing in the North and daily violated the "security and sovereignty" of North Vietnam.

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Explosive Shipments: The Soviets are still sending large quantities of explosives to North Vietnam. Some 75 tons were sent during the first week of December alone.

Three rail cars loaded with explosives destined for Vietnam were held at the Chinese border because the necessary documentation had not been given the Chinese.

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Agricultural Situation: A 27 December Nhan Dan article points out that "unsatisfactory carrying out" of several interrelated tasks for the tenth month crop "led to a careless and perfunctory fulfillment ..., a low crop output, and part of the acreage being left uncultivated." The same difficulties are said to be developing for the fifth month crop because of weather problems and poor organization of farm labor.

Inefficient organization of farm labor has contributed to agricultural production losses since 1965.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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